

VOICES: As a parent, how do you support your children who do not practice?

Members of New York Joint Territory #3 respond:

First of all, don't be a noodge. The prayer of a parent is very powerful and the most important thing. If a child comes to you with a problem, say to the child, "I will chant daimoku for you." We have to show them the greatness of the practice through our actions. If children witness their practicing parents arguing and fighting all the time, the children will be discouraged. Parents have to set an example by truly becoming happier people. Only then will children be encouraged to follow them.

— PAULA MIKSIC, New York

The best way for parents to support children in their practice is to show actual proof in their lives. I also feel it is important to teach children gongyo at an early age. This will strengthen their lives.

— TERRY McNEIL, New York

If I were a parent whose child was not interested in practicing, I would take the following steps (not necessarily in this order): I would continue to support them in whatever their interest may be. Then I would chant for them to find their own path. And then I would lead by example. I think that this formula would definitely lead them to the Gohonzon.

— MARJORIE SURPIS, New York

I truly believe that parents can best support their children by chanting for their utmost inner desires. Parents can teach children the power of the Gohonzon by using every little or major obstacle their child faces, whether at school or with friends or with family, etc., to chant. I think this would create a "best friend" relationship between the Gohonzon and the child. It helps greatly, too, if you, the parent, believe that your child will chant, no matter what.

— CAROLINA MILLER, New York

Children emulate their parents. They hardly ever do what their parents say, but most always do what their parents do. All a parent really needs to do to encourage their child is to practice sincerely. We have to teach children the correct way to live by setting an example. Eventually I saw that all the things my father taught me were good and that he was right.

— RAY PETTY, New York

The parents have to live the principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Only by example can children truly learn a religion from their parents. When children, day by day, experience the joy of life and come to understand the value and respect for life, all other issues will come into focus. They will be encouraged and they will practice.

— STAN GRIER, New York